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AUTHOR Filurin, Ellen; And Others
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ABSTRACT

In January 1986, Chicago City-Wide College (CCWC) began to revitalize its strategic planning process, striving from the outset to achieve institutional concensus during each phase of the effort. Before the strategic planning process could be implemented, the components of a strategic planning model had to be identified. An ad hoc planning committee of administrators, faculty, and staff identified the critical components of a strategic planning model: an institutional data base; statements of institutional identity, institutional direction, departmental mission, college goals, and departmental objectives; individual performance plans; a budget; and ongoing evaluation. Once these elements were identified, CCWC staff began to develop an implementation plan, which involved the following steps: (1) convincing faculty and staff of the need for a manageable and equitable process for budgetary and programmatic decision making; (2) selecting and training planning facilitators; (3) reviewing the existing external database and determining information needs; (4) involving the director of research and evaluation, the business office, key administrators, and faculty in the identification of appropriate data sources and methods of compiling statistics; (5) convening college-wide retreats and mini-retreats to achieve consensus on statements of institutional mission, direction, and long-range goals; (6) developing objectives for and by each college unit; and (7) relating planning directly to budgeting. (LAL)

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Advancing Two-year Institutions
December 9-11, 1986
Ramada Hotel Old Town
Alexandria, Virginia

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ACHIEVING INSTITUTIONAL CONSENSUS ON STRATEGIC PLANNING

PRESENTED BY: Ellen Filurin
CO-PRESENTED BY: Martha Bazik
Sally Vernon

CHICAGO CITY-WIDE COLLEGE
30 East Lake Street
Chicago, Illinois 60601

IC 870 056

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CASE Conference
Achieving Institutional Consensus on Strategic Planning
Ellen Filurin
Martha Bazik
Sally Vernon
December 10, 1986 1:30 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.

OUTLINE

I. Overview of Strategic Planning

A. Definition of Strategic Planning

B. Rationale for Developing a Strategic Planning Process

C. Rationale for Achieving Consensus on Institutional Strategic Planning

II. Components of an Institutional Strategic Planning Model

A. Institutional Data Base

1. External Factors Affecting Strategic Planning

2. Internal Factors Affecting Strategic Planning

B. Statement of Institutional Identity (Mission)

C. Statement of Institutional Direction

D. Statement of Departmental Mission

E. Statement of College Goals

F. Statement of Departmental Objectives

G. Individual Performance Plans

H. Budget

I. Evaluation of Plan

III. Process of Achieving Consensus for Institutional Strategic Planning

A. Setting the Stage for Planning

1. Discussion of the Need for Planning and for a Planning Process at Faculty and Staff Meetings

2. Identification of a Strategic Planning Facilitators Group to Provide Leadership

Outline Case Conference (Cont'd)

B. Developing the Institutional Data Base

1. External Factors (Economic, Demographic, Political) Affecting Specific Programs

2. Internal Factors (Fiscal, Political) Affecting Specific Programs

C. Developing a Statement of College Identity and Sense of Direction

1. College-Wide Planning Retreat

2. Departmental Mini-Retreats

D. Developing College-Wide Goals

1. College-Wide Retreat

2. College-Wide In-Service Training

E. Developing Plans for Implementation of College-Wide Goals

1. Developing Departmental Objectives

2. Developing Individual Performance Plans

3. Developing Budgets

4. Evaluating Strategic Planning Components

5. Refining Strategic Planning Components

During the decade of the 1980's, higher education began to face unprecedented challenges resulting from such factors as changing demographics, declining enrollments, rapid changes in technology and a phenomenal expansion of information. While revenues began to decline, fixed, variable and capital costs increased. Institutional survival was predicated on the ability to develop strategies to cope with rapid change in uncertain times. At this time, many colleges and universities launched into strategic planning efforts designed to effectively and efficiently develop and utilize the resources required to keep pace with fluctuating educational needs and interests of a diverse student population. Unfortunately, recent experiences with planning have not been positive. Elaborate plans have been formulated only to end up in a drawer, never to be consulted. Baldridge and Okimi, in a 1982 study of colleges and universities, cited considerable disillusionment with the planning process. Participants in their survey dubbed planning as meaningless and a "waste of time."

In the State of Illinois, the Council of Community College Administrators selected as the topic for its annual Fall meeting in 1985, "Challenges 1986." Members met to identify and discuss major internal and external issues that currently face their institutions and that will continue as challenges to the future. The major internal issues that emerged were a lack of consensus regarding college mission and directions and a concomitant lack of interest on the part of administration and faculty in the achievement of college goals as opposed to personal goals.

In January, 1986, the Chicago City-Wide College, one of the City Colleges of Chicago, the city's eight campus public community college system, began to address these issues through a revitalization of its strategic planning process initiated two years earlier as part of a district-wide strategic planning effort. Cognizant of the pitfalls encountered by their colleagues in this area, leadership of the Chicago City-Wide College strove at the outset to achieve institutional consensus during each phase of its strategic planning process.

The process developed at the Chicago City-Wide College includes the development of a data base, a re-statement of the mission of the institution and of each of its units, the stating of goals for the college, the development of objectives for its units, the development of a budget and of performance plans for each employee that are consistent with the strategic plan. The process involves continuous feedback and evaluation through periodic planning retreats attended by representatives of all personnel levels and mini-retreats for all units. The process is continuous and designed to ensure continuing staff involvement and consensus.

Strategic planning at the Chicago City-Wide College is defined, as per Drucker (1974), as:

> *The continuous process of making present entreprenuerial decisions systemmatically and with the greatest knowledge of their futurity; organizing systematically the efforts needed to carry out these decisions; and measuring the results of these decisions against the expectations through organized systematic feedback (p. 125).*

The Chicago City-Wide College, established in 1974, is a "college without walls." Rather than recruiting its students from among the general population, it develops and operates its programs cooperatively with a variety of public agencies, private businesses, professional associations, labor unions and community based organizations. Its seven direct instructional units, or institutes, are designed to enhance the work performance of existing employees and create a pool of trained potential employees in the areas of business, health, human service, hospitality, public service and education. In addition, the Chicago City-Wide College operates three centers with district-wide responsibilities. The Center for Disabled Student Services provides access for persons with disabilities to the full range of programs and services available through the eight City Colleges of Chicago. The Center for Media Programs has responsibility for content and delivery of courses offered over its PBS television station, radio and on videocassette. The Career Development and Placement Center provides professional development opportunities and resources for professionals who provide counseling and guidance services to students and/or clients.

Each of these institutes and centers has a history of rapid growth and autonomous development. Creative administrators and faculty continually initiated programs in response to changing community needs, and, at Chicago City-Wide College, enrollments increased. While funding was plentiful, this style of "non-directive management" proved effective. By 1986, however, revenues began to decrease and it became apparent that steps had to be taken to manage the growth process and still be responsive to educational needs both in terms of quantity and quality.

In order to accomplish this purpose in a systematic and equitable manner, faculty and staff opted to revitalize a strategic planning effort initiated on a district-wide basis in 1984 -- an effort which had "ended up in a drawer." Rather than re-invent the wheel, college staff engaged in a review of the existing plan. A massive document, it reflected all of the pitfalls that led to the indictment of most planning designs.

Although there was adequate information about the external environment upon which to base plans, there was a dearth of information regarding the internal environment that would affect the future of specific programs. There was a lack of a mechanism built into the planning process to anticipate the future or make future projections. There was a lack of a mechanism built into the plan for periodic review and updating, and, in short, the plan had little bearing on reality. Most important, there was a lack of participation and therefore understanding of the planning process by those entrusted with its implementation. All of these pitfalls had to be sidestepped if the revitalization of the planning process were to be meaningful and effective. Involvement of all personnel at each step in the process was viewed as key to its success.

Before a strategic planning process could be implemented, the components of a strategic planning model had to be identified. The ad hoc committee constituted for the purpose of developing the original plan and consisting of upper and mid-level administrators, faculty and technical-clerical staff was reconvened. They identified nine critical components of a strategic planning model.

1. *INSTITUTIONAL DATA BASE*

There was a need to identify and document the external economic, demographic and political factors affecting the district, the college, its units and programs and the internal fiscal, demographic and political factors affecting the college, its units and programs before planning assumptions could be made.

2. *STATEMENT OF INSTITUTIONAL MISSION:*

Though there were many attempts over the years at committing a mission statement to paper, it was agreed that there was a need to re-state that mission for the purposes of gaining consensus, i.e., starting everyone in the same place at the same time.

3. *STATEMENT OF INSTITUTIONAL DIRECTION:*

In conjunction with the former statement, there was a need to achieve consensus as to how, in general terms, the institution would proceed in achieving its mission.

4. *STATEMENT OF DEPARTMENTAL MISSION:*

It would become necessary, once faculty and staff agreed upon the purpose and directions of the institution as a whole, to examine and state the mission and directions of each of its component parts to ensure consistency.

5. *STATEMENT OF COLLEGE GOALS:*

The data to be collected would provide the rationale for establishing institutional goals designed to eliminate duplication, assign clear areas of responsiblity among units and support achievement of the college mission.

6. *DEPARTMENTAL (UNIT) OBJECTIVES:*

Each unit of the college would have to build upon the documented data base to state in measureable terms specific objectives for which it would be held accountable.

7. *INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE PLANS:*

The success of strategic planning would be dependent on the understanding by the individual of his or her role in achieving goals and objectives. By enumerating in writing those tasks for which an individual would be held accountable and relating rewards to achievement of individual objectives, the institution virtually could ensure success of the plan.

8. *BUDGET:*

There was a need to relate budgeting directly to planning. The budget would provide a reality base for the plan. Budget would determine the extent to which planning efforts could be implemented.

Activities for which no local funding could be identified would be included in the institution's development plan.

9. *EVALUATION:*

The strategic plan would become a living document. As such, each of its components would require annual review and refinement by those charged with its implementation.

Once the elements of the strategic plan were identified, Chicago City-Wide College staff turned to the task of developing a process for its implementation. The first step in setting the stage for effective planning was to convince faculty and staff of the need for a manageable and equitable process for budgetary and programmatic decision-making. This task was accomplished easily through discussion at faculty and staff meetings. Frustrations that had devloped as a result of unilateral and sometimes inappropriate decision-making began to be alleviated once the benefits of a structured process were communicated to all personnel.

The second step taken in setting the stage for planning was to select and train strategic planning facilitators who could function autonomously or be organized as a group to move the process smoothly through its several phases. It was decided by the ad hoc steering committee that the newest employees, regardless of personnel category, should serve as facilitators. The rationale for this decision was that, first, the newest hires would be involved quickly in the planning process. Second, they could approach their tasks objectively, not yet having developed any hidden agendas.

Their initial tasks were to act as small group leaders at a retreat organized to re-state the mission and directions of the institution. Next, each was assigned as facilitator for mini-retreats to be held by each unit in order that mission statements could be developed with input from all personnel at that level.

Prior to the beginning of implementation of the planning process, the ad hoc steering committee completed its final task, that of reviewing the existing external data base and determining the types of information that would be needed to enhance the utility of that base.

In 1984, as part of the original district-wide attempt at strategic planning, the district took advantage of a study being conducted by the Commercial Club of Chicago for the purposes of developing a plan for the City of Chicago. The district requested the Commercial Club to extrapolate data upon which to base planning assumptions relevant to the future of higher education. This data was concerned with demographic and economic changes that would occur within the city over a ten year period. Review of this data after two years determined that it and the original district and college wide assumptions made remained valid. Consensus as to the vadility of existing data was achieved at the first planning retreat as the mission and directions of the college were re-stated.

With the external data base in place, staff began to identify, at its various meetings, the information needed to develop an appropriate internal data base that would include information on student demographics, program costs, program outcomes, community concerns, revenues generated, enrollment levels, etc. The Director of Research and Evaluation is continually working with the business office, key administrators and faculty to identify appropriate data sources and methods of compiling statistics.

As a comprehensive data base was being designed, staff began to address the human side of the strategic planning process. The primary goal of this endeavor was to achieve consensus at each planning level among all faculty and staff concerned with carrying forth the mission of the college.

During the earliest discussions of a strategic planning process, the President and Vice President sought a tangible way to communicate their commitment to the endeavor and its importance. It was decided to set time aside from the usual work day, leave the campus and go to a location of some status in an attempt to highlight the special nature of the task.

The planning process, therefore, began in January 1986, with a college-wide retreat attended by the President, the Vice President, all unit heads and representatives from the faculty and technical-clerical staff. Eighty key individuals "retreated" to a local hotel where they heard a keynote address by the President, charging the group with the task of developing a workable plan, explaining its benefits and highlighting its importance to the future of the college. The Vice President explained the day's tasks and gave an overview of the long-range process. Then participants worked in small groups under the leadership of trained, objective facilitators to re-state the mission of the college and its directions. Feedback from the small groups was compiled by the facilitators and presented to the entire group for refinement. The outcome of the day's activity was achievement of consensus on a statement of mission and direction.

Following the college-wide retreat, each planning facilitator was assigned to a unit of the college and charged with the task of conducting a mini-retreat. The purposes of these activities were to communicate the

enthusiasm and outcomes of the college-wide retreat to all college personnel and to develop for each unit a mission statement consistent with that of the college. The mini-retreats were held during February - March, 1986, in a variety of locations ranging from hotels to conference centers to homes. The atmosphere of these planning meetings was relaxed yet energetic. Their outcomes were reviewed by the Vice President, and her feedback led to refinement of several unit mission statements, bringing all components of the institution into "synch" with the college-wide mission statement.

A second college-wide retreat was held in June, 1986, to establish the long-range goals for the institution. The President dubbed this meeting, held at one of Chicago's major hotels, as an "advance as opposed to a retreat. Those in attendance were the President, Vice President, unit heads, faculty chairs and technical-clerical representatives. Goals were established and consensus was achieved. Consistency with the mission was ensured as membership in the two planning groups was the same.

The next step in the process was the development of college-wide objectives by the President and his executive staff. This was accomplished through a series of meetings held at the college in July, 1986. Consensus was reached on the college-wide objectives at a monthly meeting attended by all unit heads and faculty chairs.

Preparation was made in August, 1986, for the next planning phase, that of the development of unit objectives. An outside consultant was employed to train unit heads in the art of writing measurable objectives. Once this training was completed, each unit of the college set about to establish the measurable objectives for which it would be held accountable over a one year period. All staff were involved in this process. At the same time,

performance plans were developed for each employee within the unit. Performance plans were related directly to unit objectives.

To ensure the reality of the strategic planning effort, planning was related directly to budgeting. Budgeting began at the Chicago City-Wide College, in October, 1986, as soon as unit objectives were developed. The first step in the budgeting process was the submission of requests for new initiatives, i.e., funding for activities for which no appropriations existed the year before. A budget review committee made up of the three vice presidents (two new positions were created since the beginning of the planning process), the Executive Director of Administrative Services, the Director of Grants and Planning, one institute dean, one director of a service unit and the President of the Faculty Council will analyze these requests. They will rank and recommend them for funding in accordance with college-wide priorities. Activities for which there is no college funding will become the basis of the annual college development plan.

The strategic plan at Chicago City-Wide College is being evaluated on an on-going basis. As units busy themselves with achievement of their annual objectives, the college Executive Committee is discussing a third college-wide retreat to be held in January, 1987. Consensus is that the goal should be to define terminology in the mission statement.

And so the process continues....

CASE

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Biographical Information on Speaker

Ellen Filurin
Director, Grants and Planning
Chicago City-Wide College
30 East Lake St.
Chicago, Illinois 60601
[312] 984-2849

"Achieving Institutional Consensus on Strategic Planning"
(management)

Directed toward advanced professionals

Ellen Filurin has served as grants administrator for the Chicago City-Wide College since the institution was established in 1974. Under her direction, funding for special programs and services for non-traditional students reached a level of nearly $7,000,000.00 in fiscal year 1986. Ms. Filurin is responsible for assisting the units of the college to identify their development needs; locating the appropriate funding sources; providing technical assistance in the preparation of applications and working internally with funding agencies to ensure adherence to policies and procedures once funding is secured.

Prior to her appointment at the City-Wide College, Ms. Filurin was employed as a Research Assistant at the District Offices of the City Colleges of Chicago. She served as editorial assistant in preparation of a human development textbook and was assistant producer on a local public affairs program aired over the ABC affiliate in Chicago. She holds a M.A. degree in Urban Studies from Roosevelt University in Chicago and a B.S. degree in Journalism and Communications from the University of Illinois, Urbana.

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Biographical Information on Speaker

Martha S. Bazik
Vice President
Faculty and Instruction
Chicago City Wide College
30 East Lake Street #1037
Chicago, Illinois 60601
[312] 984-2761

"Achieving Institutional Consensus on Strategic Planning"
(management)

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Dr. Bazik holds a M.A. and a Ph.D in Spanish Literature from Northwestern University. Past positions she has held are Director, Hispanic Programs, Elmhurst College; Dean, Community and Continuing Education, Moraine Valley Community College. She is currently Vice President of Faculty and Instruction, Chicago City-Wide College. She has presented several papers on a variety of management issues at local, state and national conferences. In addition, she has published several articles. She has also held several offices in local, state and national associations.

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Biographical Information on Speaker

Sally Vernon
Executive Director
Chicago City-Wide College
30 East Lake Street
Chicago, Illinois 60601
[312] 984-2871

"Achieving Institutional Consensus on Strategic Planning"
(management)

Directed toward advanced professionals

Sally Vernon is currently the Executive Director of the Center for Disabled Student Services of Chicago City-Wide College, one of the City Colleges of Chicago. Through Ms. Vernon and her staff' efforts, customized services and educational programs are provided to disabled, disadvantaged and limited english proficient students enrolled through the City Colleges of Chicago. Ms. Vernon received a Masters of Arts Degree with Distinction from DePauw University and has had 15 years experience in her profession. She is an active participant in local, state and national associations. She is the recipient of the "Leaders Project", an international leadership training program for two-year college women administrators.